2: Hutchinson E-4, 6 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

VILA RECÔNCAVO

[Class C Families]

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369 the fathers, who insisted that the children go. In the case of a woman who moves in with a new husband and brings her own children, she always makes it clear that the children are hers and not his. She will allow no interference from her husband in the matter of disciplining her children. Often the best possible relations exist between stepfather and children, but he never gives orders to them. The rural mother in all cases seems to be more exacting with her offspring than the town
[861] mother. It is not uncommon for a rural mother to beat her children, even those who are grown men, with the cipó de caboclo (a switch), whereas this would never happen in the town. She also extends her control over them even after they are married, counseling them and helping when she can, and criticizing them severely if she does not like something they do.

883 By the time they are in their late teens, boys become in-
584 terested in courting (namoro), though girls often start earlier. If a boy sees a girl who interests him, he manages to
212 meet her as often as possible on the street or at the dock, and
• 832 by looks and slight remarks makes it clear that he is interested. Or, if he can write, he may send the girl a note through
[206] a common friend. In Vila Recôncavo the telephone office is a popular place for making one's interests known, for the telephone operator is a young woman who is highly respected by most people in town and well liked by young people. A note typical of those which may pass through her hands is as follows:

Vila Recôncavo
January 7, 1951

Dona Therezinha, Salutations:

I am absolutely convinced that you do not doubt the sincerity of my love, which is always manifested so clearly in my letters and in my face when I see you.

So, I equally have the conviction of having the strange happiness of possessing your love, but in the meantime there is something lacking to complete my felicity. That is to speak to you, to hear from your lips the sincere confession of your love, to feel you near me for a few minutes.

I ask you to give me permission to speak to you, indicating the day, hour, and place in which we can meet.

You will surely not repent giving me this pleasure, for you will see that I know how to retribute your confidence

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with respect and honesty. Anxiously awaiting your answer, I am your sincere admirer.

Excuse the mistakes. End.

Themistocles Filho

In this case it was the girl's first experience with this sort of thing, so she asked an older friend to write the answer for her. It took over a week before the answer was ready and was given to the boy. During this time the girls who know about the affair discussed the possibilities: the boy's looks, his note, his friends, and so on, until nothing was left uncovered. Generally the details of such an affair are shared by the girl with her female friends. The answer, when ready, ran as follows:

Vila Recôncavo
January 10, 1951

Dear Citizen:

Initially I send my wishes for happiness so that they may become part of all that is stored in your imagination, loyal and sincere friend.

And now I want to acknowledge receipt of your letter, which in its first moment was the source of indescribable joy in my heart. Afterwards, in the surprised reality of all young girls, I asked myself about the content of all that which you wrote to me so nicely. And, although bewildered by the disillusions of many of my girl friends, I think that my authorized answer may be a meeting between the two of us, so that we may know each other better, and if we understand each other well our destinies will belong to God.

And thus I present myself.

Therezinha

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This affair went on for several more letters before the girl made a definite date. In the meantime the two passed each other in the street, in the movies, and on the dock without speaking. In the end the girl, who was only fourteen, lost her nerve, and the affair ended before any meeting took place. When such a correspondence culminates in an actual meeting, the meetings are facilitated or made difficult by the degree of vigilance exercised by the girl's parents. Often such an affair is hidden from them completely, only the girl's best friends having any

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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pardo; but common speech adds *cabra* (or *caibra*), *Cabo Verde* (*Cape Verde*), *sararé*, and *moreno*.

The *cabra*, or *caibra*, is slightly lighter in pigmentation than the *preto* and has hair a little less kinky. The *Cabo Verde* is very dark, with Caucasian features and black, glossy, "straight" hair. The infrequent *sararé* is light in color, with hair red (or sandy) and kinky. The *moreno*, many Bahians say, is the new physical type which Brazil is developing.

Quite significantly, the *morena* (or feminine *moreno*) is the "ideal type" of Bahian femininity. She is in many cases an individual of remarkable beauty. Typically, she has dark-brown eyes and dark hair, quite wavy, perhaps even curly, and Caucasian features; her color is *café com leite* (literally, "coffee with milk"; i.e., like that of one "heavily tanned"), and she has a healthy appearance. The term *morena* is seldom mentioned to a Bahian male without there appearing an instant change in his expression. His face "lights up," and a smile breaks on his lips. He pronounces *morena* with a tone indicative of admiration, affection, desire.[50] He seems pleased, happy in the contemplation of an agreeable object. Poets, both professional and amateur, pour out passionate stanzas in her honor,[51] songs are sung

[50] The *morena* has the reputation of being more desirable than lighter Brazilian women; she is commonly described as "more *ardente*" (passionate), "more *adstringente*" (clinging).

[51] As, for example, the following:

Elsa . . . .
Number One girl,
Pretty little "paca" [small Brazilian animal]
Caboclo-colored butterfly,
Splendidly "morena." . . . .

I danced the "catêrêtê" *samba* with Elsa,
Her warm flesh quivering,
Her breasts full, almost exploding,
Inside her little white blouse.

And then she fell into my arms willingly, voluptuously,
Her eyes like burning coals,
Her ruby lips
Glued to mine in delirious pleasure.

Ah! Ah! mad girl!
"Bamba" girl!
Devilish girl!

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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to her,[52] romances written.[53] Of 146 male students responding to the query, "All things being equal, whom would you prefer to marry, a *branca*, a *morena*, a *parda*, a *preta*," 117, or 80.1 per cent, replied "a *morena*." Similarly, of 93 white female students responding to a like question, 80, or 86 per cent, preferred a *moreno* for a mate.

The *morena* may, or may not, have African blood.[54] But at least in Bahia this category includes many individuals of partial African descent. For instance, a study of five hundred women classified as *morenas* in the Gabinete de Identificação indicated the probable distribution given in Table 7.

It is the opinion of Arthur Ramos[55] that, although "the charms of the *morena* exert a profound sexual attraction" and the regard in which she is held "has a sexual base in the Freudian sense," the present attitude toward the *morena* "grew out of the enthusiasm and the sentimentalism of the abolition campaign. The *morena* expresses in a symbolic way the union of the two races—the black and the white—and the absence of [caste] prejudice."

The *morena* probably constitutes a decided bond be-

[52] As, for example, the following:

Beautiful morena,
Morena,
Morena who makes me suffer!
The full moon, so bright,
Is not as luminous as your eyes.
You are a *morena*,
A wonderful girl.
There's not a *branco* who hasn't
fallen for you.

Men quarrel over you;
Everyone eagerly anticipates
Your smile.

Your heart is a boarding-house,
A family hotel
Along the seashore.
Oh, *morenínha*, do not rent all!
Leave at least a corner
For me to live in!

Often,
When you pass by,

[53] A rock on the island of Paquetá in Guanabara Bay at Rio de Janeiro very popular with young lovers, has been dedicated to the *morenínha*.

[54] Pronouncing the word *morena* (or *moreno*) with a certain emphasis or changed inflection indicates darker color.

[55] Stated in personal correspondence with the author.

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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At the same time, *meu negro* ("my Negro"), with its variation *meu nego*[16] and diminutive *meu negrinho*, all spoken in soft tones, are terms of endearment used even by whites in speaking to other whites, especially in cases of great intimacy as, for instance, between lovers. Their use constitutes, as a Bahian put it, "um modo de tratar bem" ("a way of being nice"). Occasionally one hears these expressions on the lips of a beggar asking alms of a white and, if he appears well to do, of a mulatto as well. Clerks sometimes employ them in addressing a customer. They appear to call up tender memories of intimate, personal relations like those existent, for example, between Mammy and Scarlett O'Hara in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*.

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The term *branco da Bahia* ("Bahian white") is also heard, although it is ordinarily employed *outside* Bahia. It has reference to the local custom of including many light mixed-bloods in the *branco* category. The phrase *branco por procuração* ("white by proxy") is occasionally used in Bahia but never when speaking to such an individual directly or in his presence. Light mixed-bloods are sometimes referred to as *bem areiadas* ("well sandpapered"); very dark young Negro boys as *pregos* ("nails"); very dark blacks as *pretos retintos* (literally "black blacks," or "black as coal"), and *reclames do pixe* (literally "shouts of tar," i.e., "black as pitch"). The phrase *ele tem genipapo* refers to the possession of *manchas*, as previously noted. Of a person who shows slight traces of Negro ancestry, it is said, "Ele tem dedo na cozinha" ("He has a finger in the kitchen"). Additional descriptive words or phrases include: *de côr escura* ("of dark color"), *de côr*

[16] The feminine forms are *minha negra*, *minha nega*, and *minha negrinha*.

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4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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grown up naturally between the races were never threatened, let alone destroyed, by a program of reconstruction originating from without and imposed by armed conquest. Individual ability, personal ties and family solidarity, instead of external pressure, were the levers of social advancement. The rise of the mixed-blood and of the black in Brazil has always had effectively in its favor those sentiments and personal attachments which primary relations tend normally to develop.

Such political upheavals as did occur tended to advance the mixed-bloods not as a group but as individuals. Thus the overthrow of the monarchy and the rise of the republic marked a definite break with the rural aristocracy and accelerated the rise of a new class, that of the *bachareis* and the *doutores*, among whom were many mulattoes. And, more recently, the recrystallization of the political structure following the "revolution of 1930" found many Bahian mixed-bloods in positions of trust and responsibility, since the new political "ins," who were diligently seeking to solidify their gains and to establish themselves firmly in power, found it expedient to accept such support as was readily at hand. Again the mixed-bloods figured prominently, not as a group per se but as individuals belonging to an eligible professional class.

The role of sex and of romantic love should not be overlooked. The sexual attraction which the mulatto male exerted upon daughters of rich and influential European families led quite often to elopement or, occasionally and increasingly, to marriage with parental consent.[34] Similarly,

[34] "The daughters, the *yáyás* of the *sobrados*, the *sinhás* of the *casas grandes de engenho*, let themselves be kidnaped by these Don Juans, even by such as were plebeian and of color. . . . . Sellin noted the large number of young ladies eloping . . . . during the latter half of the nineteenth century. They were girls whose parents, for reasons of blood or of social position, had

4; Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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the mulatto women profited by the myth of the sexual potency of the hybrid,[35] the high mortality of white women (especially during the nineteenth century), and the consequent successive marriages of elderly patriarchs who sought an increasing degree of sexual stimulation. Cases of "marriages of elderly white men from illustrious families, descendants of barons and well situated in life, with beautiful octoroon, quadroon, or mulatto women who carried themselves like fine ladies and gave evidence of a sexual ardor beyond the ordinary,"[36] increasingly occurred.

Today, the mixed-bloods are gaining a constantly increasing measure of social recognition. Among them are to be found prominent lawyers, jurists, physicians, engineers, politicians, diplomats, priests, educators, business and commercial magnates, musicians, painters, poets, novelists, journalists, planters.[37] In other words, the mulattoes have now penetrated to the top of the class scale.[38]

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not consented to their marriage with men for whom they had come to feel a sentimental or sexual predilection" (*ibid.*, pp. 156–57). Note also the novel *O mulato* (3d ed.; Rio, 1889), by Aluísio de Azevedo, whose hero is a mixed-blood *bacharel* educated in Europe and enamored of a white girl from a family "full of prejudices of white purity." Gilberto Freyre calls this book "a human document warm with the life of the time."

[35] A popular saying commonly heard in Bahia is: "A white woman for marriage, a Negro woman for work, a *mulata* for sexual intercourse."

[36] Freyre, *Sobrados e mucambos*, p. 337.

[37] See Lacerda, *op. cit.*, pp. 381–82; Manoel de Oliveira Lima, *The Evolution of Brazil Compared with that of Spanish and Anglo-Saxon America* (Palo Alto, 1914), p. 39; Rudiger Bilden, "Laboratory of Civilization," *Nation*, CXXVIII (January 16, 1929), 73; Thomas Ewbank, *Life in Brazil* (New York, 1856), p. 267; Professor and Mrs. Louis Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil* (Boston and New York, 1888), p. 124; Theodore Roosevelt, "Brazil and the Negro," *Outlook*, CVI (February, 1914), 409.

[38] To accelerate his social climbing, the mixed-blood has developed certain characteristic personality traits: "a pleasant smile and manner, a cordial

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/42 cont./

*563 557 the advances of dark men, but accept those of Whites, however disrespectful. That is why, he explains, they either become concubines of the latter, or else they do not marry.

*563 829 826 832 The white and blond woman, on the other hand, is represented as being strongly attracted by men with a very pigmented skin. A light mulatto, regarded very highly in his profession, is not attracted by dark women, although he admits that they are striking and pretty; he prefers the "Whites, very white." According to what he said, many men of his kind have this same inclination, quite independently of the idea of "purifying the race." He adds that the finas Whites have a real taste for the Blacks, whom they consider particularly virile and strong, and they do not take those who have manners that are too refined. Other informants, on the contrary, speak without enthusiasm of this type of women, whom they consider cold and frail. "Color gives health," says one of them, and he adds that even the Whites think so. "Very light women are repugnant to some men," declares one métis; "I even know a European who has an inclination to vomit when he sees one of them." All these opinions on the very white woman are [191] of the same order as those that in the United States, according to John Dollard (1),

> 1. "It seems possible that the image of the white woman is in part preserved from sexual thoughts and allusions of the same order, while the black woman tends to bear the entire brunt of uncontrolled sexual desire... If the black women are represented as sexually desirable in the white popular imagination, the black men are represented as particularly virile and experienced in this domain." Caste and Class in a Southern Town, New York, 1949, p. 1 ff. [113]

serve as protection against colored men and sometimes even against Whites. The morena, moreover, is regarded as the most ardent feminine type and even, sexually speaking, the most accessible. Numerous informants who have a plan to marry Whites explain or imply that they are looking for light, socially white métisses.